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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 INR-05 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 SS-14 NSC-05
SP-02 PM-03 HA-02 H-01 /041 W
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R 191605Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4302
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL FLORENCE
DIA WASHDC
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
SHAPEUSNR
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USDOCOSOUTH
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 13251
LIMDIS
USDOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF
SHAPEUSNR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJ: PERTINI: THE FOREIGN POLICY IDEALIST

1. PERTINI HAS ONLY A LIMITED INTEREST IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS. ISSUES SUCH AS THE EAST-WEST STRATEGIC BALANCE, SINO-SOVIET RIVALRY, THE SITUATION IN AFRICA HAVE ENGAGED LITTLE OF HIS ATTENTION OR THOUGHT. WHAT INTEREST HE HAS IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD IS ESSENTIALLY AN EXTENSION OF HIS DOMESTIC
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POLITICAL CONCERNS--HUMAN RIGHTS, CIVIL LIBERTIES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE. NOTHING COULD HAVE BEEN MORE TYPICAL OF THE MAN THAN THE TELEGRAM HE SENT OT BREZNEV PRO-TESTING THE TRIALS OF THE SOVIET DISSIDENTS. IN THE COURSE OF THE POSTWAR PERIOD WHATEVER APPEARED IN THE EYES TO LIMIT A PEOPLE'S FREEDOM OR SELF-DETERMINATION, EARNED HIS WRATH. THUS, JUDGING BY HIS OWN WORDS,

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NOTHING SO OUTRAGED HIM DURING THE PAST 30 YEARS AS
THE SOVIET INVASIONS OF HUNGARY AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA,
THE OVERTHROW OF ALLENDE AND THE AMERICAN INTERVENTION
IN INDO-CHINA.

2. A SECOND AND NOW QUITE SUBORDINATE ELEMENT OF
PERTINI'S VIEW OF THE WORLD IS HIS NEUTRALISM. IN THIS,
HE IS A TYPICAL PRODUCT OF EARLY POSTWAR EUROPEAN
SOCIALISM WHICH ADVOCATED A MIDDLE WAY BETWEEN THE
SOVIET UNION AND THE UNITED STATES. HE WAS CRITICAL
OF THE MARSHALL PLAN, OPPOSED TO ITALY'S MEMBERSHIP
IN NATO AND CAUTIOUS TOWARD THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.
THIS ATTITUDE (AS THAT OF THE PARTY) HAS MATURED WITH
TIME AND HE NOW ACCEPTS NATO AS ESSENTIAL FOR WESTERN
SECURITY AND EUROPEAN COOPERATION AS BEING IN THE
INTERESTS OF WESTERN EUROPE.

3. PERTINI'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE UNITED STATES HAS
BEEN ROTTED IN THIS OUTLOOK. TO HIM, AS MANY
OTHERS IN THE EUROEPAN LEFT, THE UNITED STATES HAS
BEEN AN IMPERIAL POWER THAT HAS USED ITS STRENGTH TO
SUPPORT AND IMPOSE RIGHT-WING PARTIES AND GOVERNMENTS
WHEREVER IT COULD EVERYWHERE IN THE WORLD, INCLUDING
ITALY. THEREFORE, TO HIM THE UNITED STATES BECAME THE
SYMBOL OF OPPOSITION TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
IN CHILE AND ELSEWHERE IN LATIN AMERICA, IN THE GREECE
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OF THE COLONELS AND IN ITALY. WHEN ASKED BY ORIANA FALLACI
WHY ANTI-FACISTS HAD LOST POWER IN ITALY AFTER THE WAR,
PERTINI SAID, "WE FELL IN THE AMERICAN ZONE OF INFLUENCE:
MARSHALL PLAN, ATLANTIC PACT, NATO. THE AMERICANS FEARED REVOLU-
TION AND PREVENTED US FROM DOING WHAT WE SHOULD HAVE DONE.
THEY PUT US BACK IN THE HANDS OF THE OLD-FASHIONED FASCIST
APPARATUS..." HE WENT ON TO SUGGEST THAT "AN ORGANIZATION"
(BY WHICH HE MEANT THE CIA) WAS BEHIND "A WAVE OF REACTION
IN THE WORLD" AND HAD BEEN BEHIND FASCIST VIOLENCE IN
ITALY, INCLUDING THE PIAZZA FONTANA BOMBING AND THE EXTREME
RIGHT WING BORGHESE PLOT TO OVERTHROW THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT.

4. PERTINI'S ATTITUDE HAS BEEN REFLECTED IN HIS BEHAIVOR
TOWARD AMERICAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. DURING HIS
FEBRUARY 1969 VISIT TO ROME, PRESIDENT NIXON HAD A
45-MINUTE SESSION WITH PERTINI, A MEETING PERTINI,
DESCRIBED TO FALLACI IN THE FOLLOWING WAY: "OF NIXON
I TOOK LEAVE COLDLY: "GOOD MORNING, GOOD MORNING,"
AH' HE SAID THOSE WORDS PEACE-IN-SECURITY AND I
ANSWERED: NO, NO, MR. PRESIDENT, I SAID PEACE AND
NOTHING ELSE. PEACE ONLY. AH' I KNEW VERY WELL THAT
HE MEANT, NIXON, BY THE WORD SECURITY. KISSINGER

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WAS ALSO THERE. I DID NOT KNOW IT WAS KISSINGER BUT

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LOOKED AT HIM BECAUSE HE WAS LOOKING HARD AT ME AND
IN THE MEANWHILE SUGGESTING THINGS TO NIXON. I DO
NOT KNOW WHAT HE WAS SUGGESTING. PERHAPS HE WAS
TELLING HIM THAT I HAD BEEN AGAINST THE ATLANTIC
ALLIANCE AND THE WAR IN VIETNAM. AND HIS ATTITUDE
WAS JUST AS COLD AS NIXON'S. MINE WAS EQUALLY COLD.
NIXON DID NOT SEEM TO BE A HUMAN KIND OF PERSON.
HE SEEMED TO ME VERY ARROGANT, VERY SELF-CONCEITED.
UGH THAT JAW' I REALLY DO NOT LIKE THAT JAW. AND
THOSE BULLDOG FEATURES. I REALLY DO NOT LIKE THEM.
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THEY SHOW ARROGANCE. GENT ME RIGHT: UP TO THE TIME
WE DISAGREED, HE WAS NOT ARROGANT WITH ME. AS A MATTER
OF FACT, AT THE BEGINNING HE WAS ALMOST CORDIAL.
HE SAID THAT HE KNEW ABOUT MY PAST, THAT IT DID ME
HONOR, THAT AMERICAN OFFICIALS TOO HAD PRAISED MY
COURAGE. BUT WHEN I EXPLAINED TO HIM THAT I WAS FOR
THE FREEDOM OF ALL PEOPLES AND THAT CERTAIN HOTBEDS
OF WAR MADE ME INDIGNANT, EVERYTHING CHANGED."

5. THAT SESSION WAS THE ONLY OCCASION WHEN PERTINI
MET AN AMERICAN PRESIDENT. DESPITE BEING CHAMBER
PRESIDENT, THE THIRD-RANKING OFFICIAL OF THE ITALIAN
GOVERNMENT, PERTINI REFUSED TO GO TO THE AIRPORT
OR ATTEND A DINNER OR RECEPTION BOTH UPON NIXON'S
SECOND VISIT IN 1970 AND UPON PRESIDENT FORD'S 1975
VISIT TO ROME.

6. SO FAR AS CAN BE TOLD FROM EMBASSY RECORDS,
PERTINI MET ONCE WITH AMBASSADOR ACKLEY AND ONCE
WITH AMBASSADOR MARTIN, IN BOTH CASES WITH NO RELEVANT
POLITICAL COMMENT. PERTINI'S TWO MEETINGS WITH AMBASSADOR
VOLPE WERE DIFFICULT. DESPITE VOLPE'S ATTEMPTS TO BE
FRIENDLY, PERTINI WAS COLD AND FORMAL AND BRUSHED AWAY
THE AMBASSADOR'S ATTEMPTS TO ENGAGE HIM IN SUBSTANTIVE
CONVERSATION. VOLPE'S REFERENCES TO HIS ITALO-AMERICAN
BACKGROUND WENT OVER VERY BADLY.

7. PERTINI'S CRITICAL ATTITUDE TOWARD THE UNITED STATES
GROWS OUT OF HIS PERCEPTION OF THE INTENTIONS AND EFFECTS
OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. AMERICAN SOCIETY ITSELF HAS ON
OCCASION EARNED HIS PRAISE. HE TOLD FALLACI, FOR EXAMPLE
THAT THE WAY THE AMERICAN PRESS, TELEVISION, AND CONGRESS
HAD DELVED INTO THE WATERGATE CASE SHOWED LAUDABLE
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STRENGTH AND WOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED IN HIS OWN COUNTRY.
BUT AMERICAN POLITICS AND CULTURE EVIDENTLY HOLD NO
INTEREST FOR HIM.

8. IN THE CASE OF THE SOVIET UNION, PERTINI IS AS
HOSTILE TO THE GOVERNMENT AS TO ITS FOREIGN POLICY.
IN A WORD, THE SOVIET SYSTEM STANDS FOR EVERYTHING
TO WHICH HE IS OPPOSED. HIS TELEGRAM TO BREZHNEV
PROTESTING THE CURRENT TRIALS OF DISSIDENTS WAS THE
NEW PRESIDENT'S FIRST PUBLIC ACT. IN 1956, PERTINI
DENOUNCED THE SOVIET INVASION OF HUNGARY AND IN 1968

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THAT OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA. HE WAS PROFOUNDLY AFFECTED BY THE SELF-IMMOLATION BY JAN PALACH. AFTER HUNGARY HE REFUSED FOR A TIME TO SHAKE HANDS WITH THE RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR AND AFTER CZECHOSLOVAKIA HE TOLD AMBASSADOR RHYZOV THAT THE SOVIET ACTION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA WAS NO DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THE FASCISTS HAD DONE IN ITALY. THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR BROKE OFF THE MEETING IN ANGER AND REPORTEDLY NEVER MET PERTINI AGAIN UNTIL PERTINI'S RECEPTION FOR THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS ON JULY 14. ON THIS OCCASION PERTINI SAID TO THE PAPAL NUNCIO, NEAR WHOM RYZHOV WAS STANDING, "WHATEVER DIFFERENCES YOU AND I MAY HAVE, WE AGREE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF LIBERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS." THIS REMARK EVIDENTLY SO DISQUIETED THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR THAT HE WAS RELUCTANT TO BE PRESENTED TO PERTINI. IN THE EVENT HE WAS TAKEN TO THE PRESIDENT BUT FOLLOWING AN EXCHANGE OF GREETINGS THE ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR WAS INSERTED TO AVOID ANY POSSIBLE INCIDENT. GARDNER

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